







*Competitors display their skills in chic garments, especially classic outerwear.*

# The Wool Wrap-up

National competition recognizes meticulous garment construction

BY ERICA REDFERN

**M**ake It With Wool (MIWW) is an annual competition that strives to highlight the natural beauty and versatility of wool fabrics and yarns. It encourages makers to use wool in ways that enable its attributes to truly shine. The competition is sponsored by the American Wool Council, the American Sheep Industry, and American Sheep Industry Women. All garments must be created from fabric or yarn composed of at least 60 percent wool or specialty fibers such as alpaca, mohair, and cashmere. Contestants compete in age groups: Those age 12 and younger compete as preteens, 13- to 16-year-olds compete as juniors, 17- to 24-year-olds as seniors, and those 25 and older as adults. The garments are judged on the quality of sewing, the garment's or ensemble's appropriateness to the contestant's lifestyle, and the creativity demonstrated. MIWW begins with state-level competition, the winners proceeding to the national judging round. Special accolades for categories such as outstanding construction, machine embroidery, and needlework can be awarded at the judges' discretion. College students are eligible to compete for the Fashion/Apparel Design award, which is featured at the national competition. *Threads* features works by six of the 2020 national competition winners on the following pages.

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*Erica Redfern is Threads' former assistant editor.*



## Adult Winner


### Meighan Stevens

Webster, Ohio

Meighan created a coat and dress ensemble. The double-breasted coat was sewn from 100 percent Pendleton wool coating in a deep merlot color, which she won from a previous MIWW competition. The coat pattern, Butterick 5685 (out of print), features a fitted, princess-seamed bodice and slight A-line skirt. Meighan added waffle pin tucks as an allover design on the back bodice. The coat is lined with gold brocade, with piping where the lining is joined to the front facings. Meighan highlighted the lining seam with a line of honeycomb machine stitches in matching merlot thread. Buttons on the coat front disguise the internal covered snaps that close the coat. For a little hidden bling, she added a gold chain loop and a charm with her initial to the back lining.

The dress was made from a cream-colored wool crepe following Vogue 1513, a princess-seamed design by Badgley Mischka. It features a stand collar and a pleated drape detail at the right shoulder. Meighan incorporated fishing line in the drape detail's edge to add body and bounce, a technique she learned from her mother. The dress has a free-hanging lining, but the fashion fabric's seam allowances are also finished individually with Hong Kong finishes.

Meighan's love of sewing stems from her mother, who taught her many tricks of the trade. She has been participating in the MIWW competition for 13 years. She credits the MIWW program with inspiring her creativity and connecting her with friends who share a passion for sewing.



The coat features piping at the facing seam and waffle pin tucks on the back.





# Senior Winner

## Charlotte Waldron

Hamilton, Ohio

Charlotte made a coat and dress outfit for her second year competing in MIWW. The knee-length coat is sewn in a vibrant blue Pendleton wool coating and features a stand collar, bound buttonholes, and double front and back princess seams. Three self-fabric-covered buttons sit at center front. It was made with McCall's 6800, which has a fitted bodice that flares at the hem. Charlotte lined the coat with metallic floral brocade and sewed a small charm to the left front hem.

The dress, based on Style Arc's Layla Dress, is made from 100 percent superwash merino wool suiting. Charlotte altered the pattern to include scalloped edges at the dress and sleeve hems, revised the neckline and bust shaping, and added a waistband. The back of the dress has a slit for walking ease that is positioned deftly between two scallops in the hem. The hem corners contain small dress weights to keep the slit edges hanging properly during wear.

Charlotte learned to sew at age 8 and has sewn many garments in the 12 years since, including formalwear, figure-skating dresses, and cosplay ensembles. She is majoring in English studies with a minor in creative writing at Miami University in Oxford, Ohio.



*Touches like the brocade lining and the scalloped edges indicate the care put into planning both garments.*



## Junior Winner

### Madeline Douglas

Flat Rock, Indiana

Madeline's ensemble includes a coat, top, and skirt. The coat uses BurdaStyle's Duffel Coat #109 pattern from the October 2018 magazine. The silver-gray wool coating has a short pile, giving it a faux-fur-like appearance. The coat has a center-front separating zipper covered with a placket, which is closed with self-fabric loops and buttons. It also has side-seam pockets, topstitching, and a full lining. Madeline added a partial back belt.

The pencil skirt was made with BurdaStyle 8765. Madeline sewed it from a plaid wool fabric she won at 2019's state-level MIWW. The skirt is close fitting with a kick pleat at the back, an invisible zipper, and a waistband with a button closure.

The top uses BurdaStyle's Jersey Top #113 pattern from the patternmaker's November 2018 issue. The fabric is a black wool jersey knit with spandex for recovery. The design has a boatneck, side seam gathering, and an angled front panel.

Madeline has been sewing for eight years, beginning in the third grade, when she joined 4-H, although it was her grandmother who taught her to sew. She says sewing is a useful skill that has taught her other valuable life lessons, including patience and attention to detail.



*The self-fabric loops and buttons conceal the coat's center-front zipper closure.*



# ***Fashion/Apparel Design Winner***

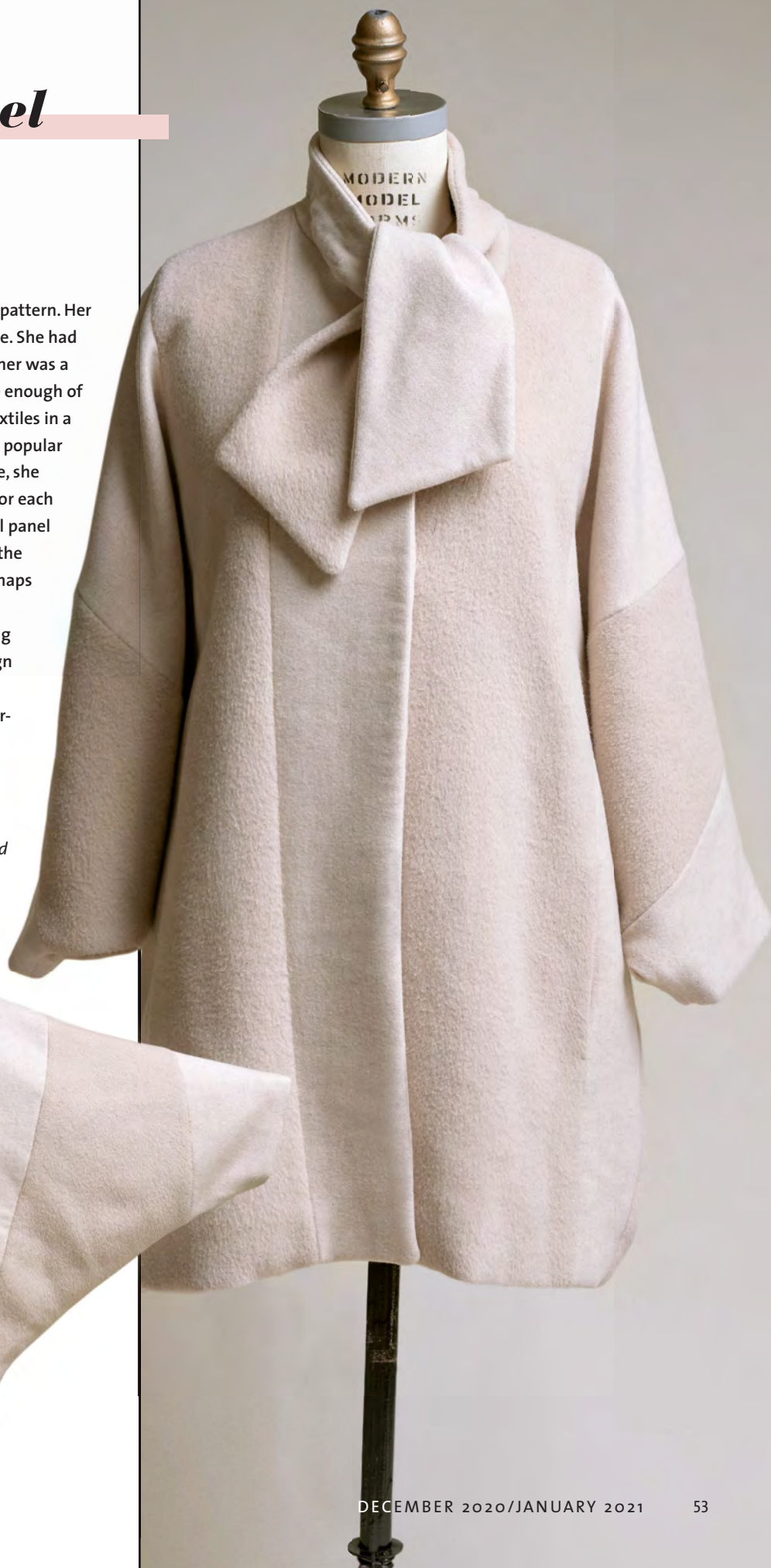
**Yiling Lai**

*Philadelphia, Pennsylvania*

Yiling created her oversized coat by draping her own pattern. Her inspiration for the design came from a fabric shortage. She had two fabrics—one was 100 percent alpaca, and the other was a wool and cashmere blend. However, she did not have enough of either to make a complete coat. She combined the textiles in a design that was inspired by the cocoon-shaped coats popular in the 1950s and 1960s. After draping the coat's shape, she transferred it to paper and marked out the sections for each fabric. The coat's dolman sleeves extend from vertical panel seams and emphasize the subtle striping created by the different wool fabrics. The front closes with hidden snaps and features an attached scarf at the neckline.

Yiling began sewing four years ago. She took sewing classes, which confirmed her interest in fashion design and her passion for making clothes. She received her master's degree in Fashion Design from Drexel University in Philadelphia in June 2020.

*Limited yardage inspired  
Yiling to draft this two-  
tone cocoon coat.*





# Senior Outstanding Construction Winner

## Roman Merch

Rose Hill, Kansas

Roman's suit consists of a jacket, vest, and trousers. The jacket and pants were made with Vogue 8890. He chose a wool-blend suiting and a deep purple lining material for all the pieces. The jacket has two outer pockets with pocket flaps at the side fronts and two internal pockets. The flaps can be tucked in to give the appearance of a jetted pocket. Roman harvested shoulder pads and buttons from suits he found at a Goodwill store. The pants front is partially lined, from the waistline to just below the knee, a traditional menswear feature that helps to reduce wrinkling during wear.

The vest follows Vogue 7488. It has two single-welt pockets



and two faux pockets.

The vest back is made from the same suiting material as the front.

Roman has been sewing for 13 years, and has entered MIWW for the past four years. He visited several tailoring shops to study high-end suits and ask for guidance while sewing his suit. He credits his love of sewing to his mother, who taught him.

*Inspired by classic menswear, this three-piece suit has a colorful lining for a touch of fun.*





# Junior Outstanding Construction Winner

Cortney Olinger

Plankinton, South Dakota

Sixteen-year-old Cortney created a double-breasted coat and simple sheath dress. Both garments were made with fabrics she won in last year's MIWW competition. The coat is based on Vogue 8884, a semifitted, lined design with a collar and front and back yokes. The side seams have deep pockets. The pattern calls for topstitching along most seams, and Cortney carefully applied that detail.

The sheath dress was made from McCall's 7681 (out of print). It is fully lined and has a boatneck, small bust darts, elbow-length sleeves, and a center-back invisible zipper closure. Cortney found the challenge of matching the plaids required focus to achieve the desired accuracy. She had the opportunity to borrow an industrial blind-stitch sewing machine to apply a professional hem finish.

Now in her senior year of high school, Cortney started sewing when she was about 7 years old. Her passion for it has inspired her to get one-on-one training from a local seamstress to learn new techniques and to strive to master her sewing skills.



Photos: Mike Yamin.

*Precise stitching and plaid alignment are hallmarks of the construction quality achieved in this ensemble.*